

Case 2764

***Acrolocha* Thomson, 1858 (Insecta, Coleoptera): proposed conservation, and *Coprophilus* Latreille, 1829: proposed designation of *Staphylinus striatulus* Fabricius, 1792 as the type species**

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Abstract. The purpose of this application is to conserve the usage of the names *Acrolocha* Thomson, 1858 and *Coprophilus* Latreille, 1829 for genera of rove beetles (STAPHYLINIDAE). *Acrolocha* is threatened by the senior objective synonym *Elonium* Leach in Samouelle, 1819, a name that has caused confusion because it has been used for two completely different taxa, *Acrolocha* and *Coprophilus* in the OMALIINAE and OXYTELINAE respectively. The usage of *Coprophilus* is maintained by the proposed designation of *Staphylinus striatulus* Fabricius, 1792 as the type species.

1. Leach in Samouelle (1819, p. 175) erected the new genus *Elonium*, giving *Omalium striatum* as its type and only included species; he did not cite an author's name with the species. The name *Elonium* has been credited to Samouelle by some subsequent authors.

2. Stephens (1829a, p. 25) and Curtis (1829, col. 29) both placed *Omalium striatum* Gravenhorst, 1802 (p. 119) in *Omalium* Gravenhorst, 1802 (p. 111) and *Staphylinus striatulus* Fabricius, 1792 (p. 525) in *Elonium*, apparently regarding Leach's citation of the former species as an error for the latter. Stephens (1833, col. 108; 1834, p. 349) continued to place *O. striatum* Gravenhorst in *Omalium* and (1833, col. 107) *S. striatulus* Fabricius in *Elonium* (although he treated *Elonium* as a synonym of *Coprophilus* Latreille, 1829; see para. 3).

3. Latreille (1829, p. 439) erected the new genus *Coprophilus*, with '*Omalium rugosum* Gravenhorst' as the only species named. Gravenhorst (1802, p. 115) attributed *Staphylinus rugosus* (placed in *Omalium*) to Olivier (1795; genus no. 42, p. 30), who in turn referred it to *S. rugosus* Fabricius, 1775 (p. 267). Olivier repeated Fabricius's description and mentioned two more Fabrician references, as well as providing illustrations (pl. 5, fig. 43). It follows from this that the nominal species *Staphylinus rugosus* Fabricius, 1775 is the type of *Coprophilus* by monotypy. However, at least since 1829 (Curtis, cols. 29, 30; Stephens, 1829a, p. 24; 1829b, pp. 293, 297), *rugosus* Fabricius has been consistently placed in *Oxytelus* Gravenhorst, 1802. The name *rugosum* 'Ol.' or 'Grav.' has been treated as a synonym of *Staphylinus striatulus* Fabricius, 1792 and placed in *Elonium* or *Coprophilus* (see para. 2). Like Stephens (1833), Erichson (1839, p. 609) and Lacordaire (1854, p. 120) listed *Elonium* as a synonym of the younger name *Coprophilus* without comment. These authors and also Kraatz (1857, p. 1000) kept *striatum* Gravenhorst in *Omalium*.

4. Thomson (1858, p. 38) erected the new genus *Acrolocha* with *Omalium striatum* [no author cited] as type species by original designation and monotypy; the combination *Acrolocha striata* (Gravenhorst, 1802) has been widely used since (see para. 12). *Acrolocha* is thus a junior objective synonym of *Elonium* (see para. 1).

5. Tottenham (1949, p. 359) followed Stephens and Curtis of 1829 (and Westwood, [1838], p. 18) in regarding *Staphylinus striatulus* Fabricius as the type species of *Elonium*. As part of his justification, Tottenham said '...besides, it is inconceivable that at that date [1819] Samouelle [sic, correctly Leach] should have separated *striatum* Gravenhorst from the genus *Omalium*... The true *Omalium striatum* Gravenhorst, 1802, has never been taken in Britain'. In 1954 Tottenham stated (p. 38) that the wide distribution of *S. striatulus* in Britain supported the idea that Leach was actually dealing with that species when he erected *Elonium* (see also para. 2), although on p. 19 he suggested that previous British records of *Acrolocha striata* (Gravenhorst) actually referred to *A. sulcula* (Stephens, 1834) (see para. 10).

6. Blackwelder (1952, p. 146) agreed with Tottenham (1949) that 'an error is evident in Samouelle's citation...' and that the original designation of *Omalium striatum* as type species of *Elonium* referred to *S. striatulus* Fabricius, which is placed in the OXYTELINAE. He corrected Tottenham's attribution of *Elonium* to Samouelle, giving Leach as the author. Arnett (1960, pp. 238, 255), Watanabe & Shibata (1961, p. 43), Burakowski, Mroczkowski & Stefanska (1979, p. 81), Muona (1979, p. 19) and Hayashi (1981, p. 88) followed Blackwelder and Tottenham, using the name *Elonium* in the OXYTELINAE without comment.

7. Steel (1957, p. 157) used the name *Acrolocha*, without comment, in revising the genus of OMALIINAE that includes *Omalium striatum* Gravenhorst, which he treated as a junior synonym of *Staphylinus minutus* Olivier, 1795 (genus no. 42, p. 38).

8. Herman (1970, p. 367) disagreed with Stephens, Tottenham and Blackwelder's interpretation of Leach's intention, arguing that his designation of *striatum* as type should be taken literally, with *Elonium* being a senior objective synonym of *Acrolocha* and belonging to the OMALIINAE. This leaves *Coprophilus* Latreille, 1829 as the name for the genus of OXYTELINAE that includes *striatulus*. Herman pointed out (apparently for the first time) that Stephens never explained why he regarded Leach's designation of '*Omalium striatum*' as an error for *Staphylinus striatulus* Fabricius.

9. As stated in para. 3, the type species of *Coprophilus* is formally *Staphylinus rugosus* Fabricius, 1775, but since the year (1829) when Latreille proposed *Coprophilus* that nominal species has been placed in *Oxytelus*, while *S. striatulus* Fabricius, 1792 has been synonymized with '*Omalium rugosum* Gravenhorst'. I propose that *S. striatulus* be designated as the type species of *Coprophilus*. The following authors use *Coprophilus* in this sense: Kloet & Hincks (1977), Moore & Legner (1979), Harde (1984) and Uéno, Kurosawa & Satô (1985) and a further list of 41 references is held by the Commission Secretariat.

10. Kloet & Hincks (1977, p. 23) followed Tottenham (1954, p. 19, but not p. 38; see para. 5) in saying that the name *striatum* Gravenhorst, 1802 (placed in either *Omalium* or *Acrolocha*) has been widely used by British authors for what is really *Anthobium sulculum* Stephens, 1834 (p. 336), first described from Britain. It is possible, perhaps even likely, that Leach was one, or the first, of these authors. This would explain his seemingly unlikely choice of a species (*striatum*) not then occurring in Britain as the type species of his genus *Elonium*. No one appears to have considered either specimens or the text accompanying the type species designation of *Elonium* in attempting to

understand Leach's intent. Leach's collection is in the Natural History Museum, London (Hammond, 1972, p. 130). My search in late 1989 of both the general and British collections there failed to uncover any Leach specimens of *striatum*, *striatulus* or *sulculum*, so Leach's own collection offers no help. Although brief, Leach's (1819, p. 174) characterization of *Omalium* (s.l., including his new genera *Elonium* and *Anthobium*) included: 'thorax transverse-quadrate, the anterior angles rounded'. Examination of specimens of the three species in question shows that: *striatulus* has the pronotum quadrate to slightly elongate, with the anterior corners strongly narrowed and protruding forward alongside the head; *striatum* has the pronotum transverse with obtusely angulate anterior corners; and *sulculum* has the pronotum slightly transverse with distinctly rounded anterior corners. These observations and current knowledge of the history of the British fauna suggest, in agreement with Tottenham (1954, p. 19) and Kloet & Hincks (1977), that what Leach meant by *Omalium striatum* was actually the species now correctly known as *sulculum* Stephens, and not *striatulus* Fabricius. *Elonium* Leach was, therefore, based on a misidentification of the type species.

11. There seems no reason to ignore both Leach's text and his apparent intent by designating *Staphylinus striatulus* as the type species of *Elonium*. This leaves a choice between *Omalium striatum* Gravenhorst (the nominal species given by Leach) and *Anthobium sulculum* Stephens (the taxonomic species Leach was probably dealing with). There seems no doubt that the two are congeneric (e.g. Steel, 1957), and choice of either as type species would result in the use of *Elonium* Leach in Samouelle (1819) for the genus of OMALIINAE usually known as *Acrolocha* Thomson, 1858, even since Herman's (1970) paper (see para. 8).

12. My search of the literature reveals only six relatively recent uses of *Elonium* for the genus generally known as *Acrolocha*: Moore & Legner (1974, p. 553; 1975, p. 187), by myself (Thayer, 1978, p. 148 — actually a misidentification based on Moore & Legner (1974)), Uhlig & Vogel (1981, p. 84), Lohse & Lucht (1989, pp. 126, 285) and Koch (1989, p. 221). The last two are not really independent uses. All other works I have examined use the name *Acrolocha* instead of *Elonium*; Harde (1984), Mahler (1987) and Zanetti (1987) are examples, and a list of 28 works by 25 authors in the last 40 years is held by the Commission Secretariat. I know of five relatively recent uses of *Elonium* in the OXYTELINAE, i.e. as a synonym of the much more widely used *Coprophilus* (see para. 6).

13. Because of (1) the confusion engendered by past use of the name *Elonium* for two completely different taxa in the OMALIINAE and OXYTELINAE, (2) the existence of the more widely used name *Coprophilus* for the latter of these, and (3) the existence of the much more commonly used junior synonym *Acrolocha* for the other, I propose that the best course to promote stability of nomenclature is to suppress the name *Elonium* and to continue to use *Coprophilus* and *Acrolocha* for the two genus-group taxa involved. Although neither of the genera is of economic or medical importance (with concomitant frequent citation), it is an undesirably confusing situation.

14. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

(1) to use its plenary powers:

(a) to suppress the generic name *Elonium* Leach in Samouelle, 1819 for the purposes of the Principle of Priority but not for those of the Principle of Homonymy;

- (b) to set aside all previous fixations of type species for *Coprophilus* Latreille, 1829, and to designate the nominal species *Staphylinus striatulus* Fabricius, 1792 as the type species of the genus;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the following names:
 - (a) *Acrolocha* Thomson, 1858 (gender: feminine), type species by original designation *Omalium striatum* Gravenhorst, 1802;
 - (b) *Coprophilus* Latreille, 1829 (gender: masculine), type species by designation in (1)(b) above *Staphylinus striatulus* Fabricius, 1792;
- (3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the following names:
 - (a) *striatum* Gravenhorst, 1802, as published in the binomen *Omalium striatum* (specific name of the type species of *Acrolocha* Thomson, 1858);
 - (b) *striatulus* Fabricius, 1792, as published in the binomen *Staphylinus striatulus* (specific name of the type species of *Coprophilus* Latreille, 1829);
- (4) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology the name *Elonium* Leach in Samouelle, 1819, as suppressed in (1)(a) above.

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